has been signed between Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Mobil International Petroleum Inc. USA to form a Joint Venture Company in India for blending and marketing of Mobil brand lubricants. In addition to blending the lubricants in the existing blending plants of IOC at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, the JVC will also put up a blemiing plant of 1,50,000 MTs capacity atAsaoti in Haryana at an estimated cost of Rs. 47 crores using state-of-the-art technology. The plant is expected to be commissioned in mid 1996. The autho. rised and initial paid up caoital of the JVC is Rs. 50 crores and Rs. 20 crores respectively which would be shared equally by the JV partners. The JV product is likely to be marketed by May, 1994.

LPG Agencies in Punjab

2454. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 350 given in the Rajya Sabha on 23 rd February, 1994 and state:

(a) the number of cooking gas aoencies in the country, particularly in the State of Punjab at present;

(b) the number of LPG agencies proposed to be sanctioned this year along-with their locations in various States; and

(c) what is the number of LPG gas agencies that are proposed to be sanctioned during the year 1994 in the State of Punjab?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) As on 1-1-1994, there were 4221 LPG distributorships in the Country, out of which 176 LPG distributorships were functioning In Punjab.

(b) and (c) 623 LPG distributorships have been included in the current Marketing Plan 1952-94 to be put up at different locations in the country, of which 35 proposals are for the State of Punjab.

Approval of proposal for Bharat Petroleum

2455. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATU RAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) wnather Government have approved a proposal for Bharat Petroleum to raise its authorised capital from Rs. 50 crores to Rs. 200 crores;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the seasons therefor; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STAT OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) Government have approved the proposal of M/s. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. to increase its authorised share capital from Rs. 50 crores to Rs. 200 crores. This increase will widen the capital base of the Corporation and enable it to raise funds for financing its expansion plans covering both refining and marketing operations.

Handing over the work of exploration to Government of Gujarat

2456. SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL: Will the Minister of PETRO LEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to hand over the work of exploration of oil and gas to the Gujarat Government in their areas;

(b) if so, what are the conditions laid down for the same; and

(c) whether Government would consider giving this work locally to other State also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Government of India have approved the award of contracts to Gujarat State Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd. Ahmedabad for development of 5 small sized oil fields falling in the State of Gujarat.